

MARYLAND ZOO

Maryland's Bees

Maryland is home to about 400 species of bees, including honey, bumble, sweat, miner, leaf-cutter, mason, and plasterer bees.

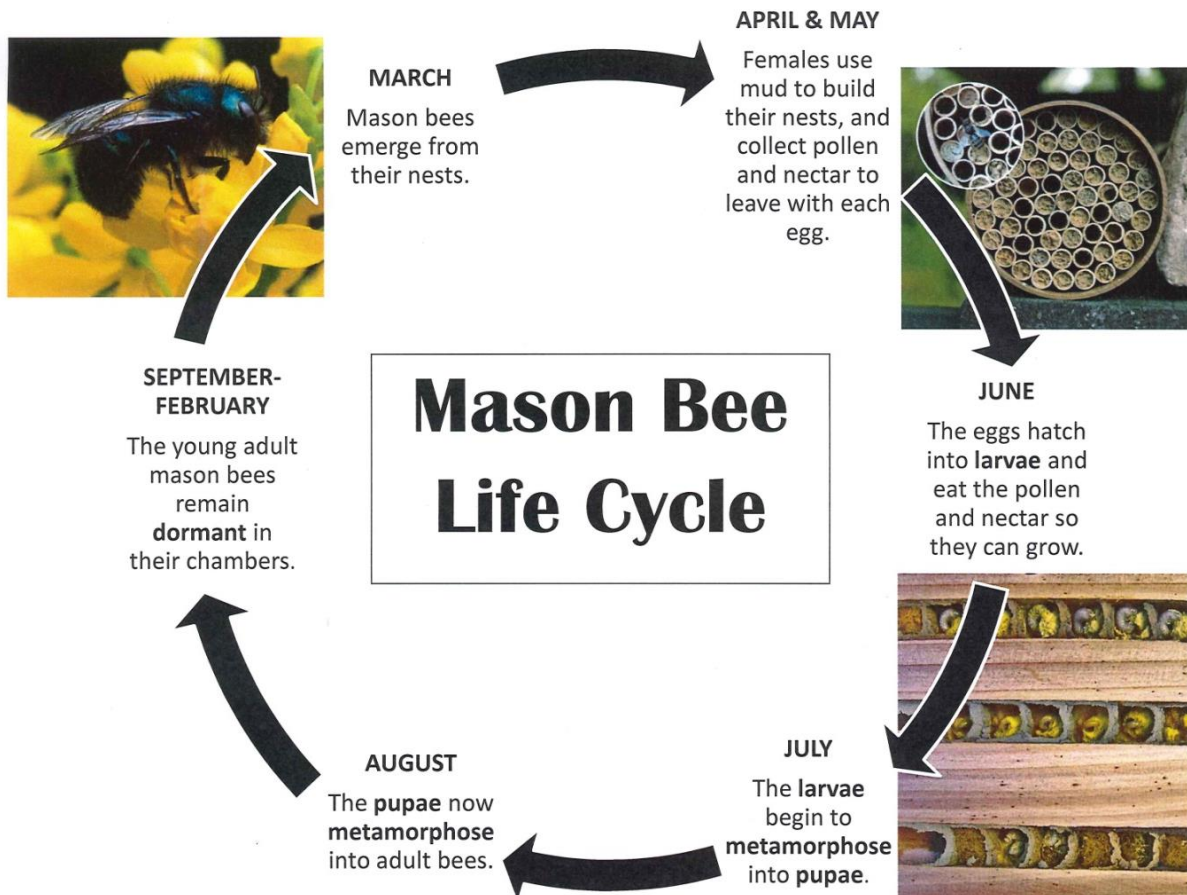
Why Are Bees Important?

Bees not only pollinate our local plants but also crops grown on farms. Almost a third of crops grown in the United States are pollinated by honey bees alone.

Unfortunately, our native bee populations are declining due to the loss of native plants as well as over-use of pesticides. Planting native plants in your garden is a great way to help our local bees. Also avoid using pesticides. Visit the Maryland Department of Natural Resources website (<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wabees.aspx>) to learn more about bees, how to create a pollinator garden, and information on DNR's approved organic pesticides.

Mason Bees v. Honey Bees

Mason bees are smaller than honey bees and are often mistaken for flies due to their black and blue coloring. Unlike honey bees which live in large colonies with a queen bee, female mason bees each lay their eggs in holes in trees. They create chambers for the eggs using mud, which is where they received their name. Mason bees also almost never sting!



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Building a Mason Bee Nest

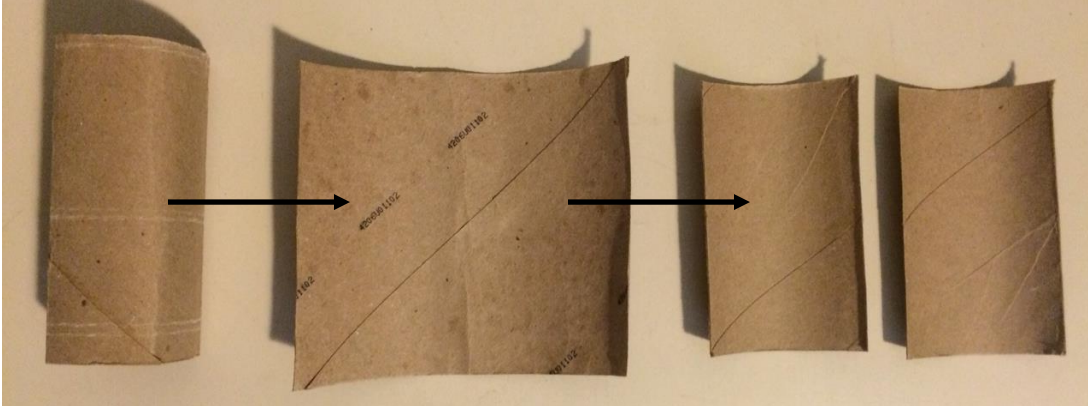
You can attract mason bees to your garden by providing them a home. The instructions below will help you create a mason bee nest using recycled materials.

Materials:

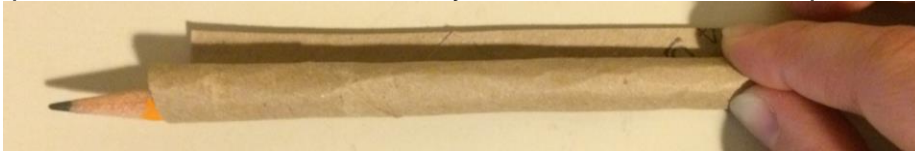
- A clean plastic or glass jar
- Empty toilet paper rolls
- Scissors
- Tape

Instructions:

1. Cut the toilet paper roll into two pieces, cutting down the roll lengthwise.



2. Roll up one of the pieces into a tube. Wrap a small piece of tape around the tube to hold it in place. The space inside the tube should only be about the width of a pencil.



3. Place your finished tube inside your jar. Make enough tubes to fill the entire jar.



4. Place your finished mason bee nest out in your garden. Check your nest on occasion to see if any mason bees have found it! After the bees emerge from your nest in March, replace the tubes for the next females to lay their eggs in April. Make sure there is mud nearby for the females to build mud chambers for each egg.

Resources:

- Maryland Department of Natural Resources:
<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wabees.aspx>